

Volume A2: Academics	A2.03.7 Learning Management System Effective Date: 07/01/2015 Last Revised: 08/06/2024 PUBLIC COMMENT DOCUMENT	Responsible Office: Center for Teaching and Learning
Chapter 03: General		Responsible Officer: Director

POLICY STATEMENT

In order to support technology-enhanced teaching, Northeastern Illinois University (the “University”) provides access to a Learning Management System (LMS) that offers a virtual electronic environment for every credit course at the University, for use by faculty, students, and staff associated with such courses.

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

This policy outlines the obligations of the University and users of the LMS regarding the safe and effective use of the LMS and delineates the obligations of the University, support areas, and individual users with regard to usage, provision, and support of the LMS.

WHO IS AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY

This policy covers all users of the LMS offered by Northeastern Illinois University.

DEFINITIONS

Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL): The University unit responsible for supporting faculty teaching innovation.

Faculty, Faculty Member: A category, and member of that category, of employees of Northeastern whose primary job duties include teaching.

Instructor: An LMS role that provides the user with the ability to use tools for receiving student work, and grading, among other functions.

Learning Management System (LMS): The software application used to host virtual class environments.

Master Shell: An LMS course created to house permanent backup materials for an individual faculty member and course.

NetID: The Northeastern user name assigned to individual students, faculty, and staff.

Student Information System: The software application used to manage official student data.

REGULATIONS

Copyright Law of the United States: (17 U.S.C.): <http://www.copyright.gov/title17/>



Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA): (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99),
<http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/retrieveECFR?gp=&SID=0b4547396fd9a36b869a1ea376ce85b7&r=PART&n=34y1.1.1.1.33>.

NEIU Board of Trustees Bylaws, Governing Policies and Regulations:

https://www.neiu.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2020/12/09/BoT%20Regs%20Section%20II%20A.%20Employees%20General_revision_11192020.pdf#page=10

NEIU Collective Bargaining Agreement:

http://gamut.neiu.edu/DOCUMENTS/Faculty_Staff/Faculty_Resources/Policies/CBA.pdf.

Non-Course Usage of the LMS

The University provides the LMS only for instructional purposes and for uses that directly support instruction (i.e., to support courses offered by faculty). Organizations, special interest groups, task forces, committees, and other individuals not a) enrolled in academic courses, or b) in direct course-support roles, may not use the LMS to manage communication, interaction, or resource sharing for their groups.

Account Life Cycle

No LMS user's account shall be permitted to continue after the user's Northeastern NetID account is disabled when the individual has separated from the University, except in cases of guest, temporary, and test accounts (see 4.6 GUEST AND TEMPORARY ACCESS, below).

1. COURSE MANAGEMENT

1.1. LMS Course Master Shells

Each faculty member who teaches a course will have a Master LMS course shell created for that course. Master course shells are not associated with a given semester, and are not accessible to students. Faculty must use their Master course shells to house the latest version of their course design and materials (see 1.11 DATA MANAGEMENT below).

1.2. LMS Course Teaching Shells

Several weeks prior to a semester or term, the University will create empty LMS course shells under the applicable semester or term for all course sections whose information resides in the University's student information software system.

1.3. Course Identifiers and Course Names

The LMS course ID and the displayed course name must be constructed using data from the University's student information system. Course IDs are permanent and may not be changed.

1.4. Course Section Combination

Faculty members teaching multiple sections of a course, as defined in the University's student information system, have the right to combine those sections in the LMS.

1.5. Disk Usage Quotas

While there shall be no limitation set on the aggregate size of LMS course shells, an individual-file limit must be placed on individual files uploaded into LMS course shells, in order to help ensure system access and stability.

Faculty members must store media files and other large files outside the LMS, and must link to large externally-hosted files from within the LMS.



1.6. Course Activation

New LMS course shells must be created in an inactive status (see 1.1 LMS COURSE TEACHING SHELLS, above), so that faculty members must “opt in” if they wish to use the LMS for specific courses.

The faculty member assigned to the course via the University’s student information system must be able to see inactive courses in the LMS, and students must be unable to see the course.

Faculty members are responsible for activating their LMS course teaching shells on or before the first day of the semester or term in which the LMS course shell is to be used. LMS activation is required for faculty to receive course evaluations at the end of the semester.

1.7. Course Export

Faculty members are responsible for exporting their entire LMS course(s) after the end of each semester or term to preserve student work and grades in case of future inquiries (see 1.11 DATA MANAGEMENT below).

1.8. Importing From Course Backups

LMS administrators must provide a mechanism for re-importation of course-backup files into the LMS.

1.9. Publisher Course Cartridges

Faculty members are responsible for working with content publishers to obtain any needed download keys or methods for linking external publisher content, as well as for learning how to use and modify publisher materials within their LMS course shells.

1.10. Sharing Course Materials with Another Instructor

It is the responsibility of faculty members to clarify the terms under which content created by them is shared with colleagues (e.g., for use only as-is, for use only in a given LMS course shell, etc.. See 5.4 OTHER ENROLLMENTS, below.)

1.11. Data Management

Backups of the University’s LMS data must be performed by the CTL on a regular basis.

Full-environment data backups for emergency-restoration purposes must be housed on physical media (e.g., portable storage drives).

Master course shells may be removed from the LMS only after faculty members are no longer employed at the University.

In order to avoid system slow-downs due to data overload, semester-based teaching course shells must be removed from the LMS when two years have elapsed since the last day of the semester or term in which the course was originally offered. No separate backup of teaching course shells will be created prior to their removal (see 1.1 LMS MASTER SHELLS and 1.7 COURSE EXPORT, above).

Semester-based teaching course shells that remain empty after the end of the semester or term for which they were created may be removed by the LMS administrators at any time thereafter.

1.12. LMS Grade Information Not Official

The Grades tool in the LMS is for the convenience of students and faculty. It is not an official Northeastern record of student grades, nor is it considered a legally binding record of student performance. Information in the Grades tool in LMS course shells is the sole responsibility of the faculty member. Official university grades must be entered in the University’s student information system.



2. COPYRIGHT AND FAIR USE

2.1. Copyrighted Materials

Copyright law and fair use guidelines allow faculty to provide limited access to copyrighted materials within the LMS. By using the LMS, faculty members agree to comply with copyright law and request permission, when appropriate, before using the work of others.

2.2. Linking to External Sites from the LMS

The LMS provides the capacity to link to the University's library e-reserves, external web sites, and other online resources. Where possible, faculty members must link to other sites (including University-licensed content through the library's e-reserve system) or use the "share" or "embed" code provided for many online multimedia resources, rather than upload copies of online materials directly into their LMS course shells.

It is the responsibility of the faculty member to confirm that links from the LMS to external sites or resources are valid. (See University policy I1.01.1 Acceptable Use of University Technology Resources: Reference and Links to External Content).

3. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

3.1. Ownership of LMS Course Shells

The University shall own the structure and tools provided as parts of the LMS itself, as well as individual course environments as created in the LMS by the University's ID management system or by the University's LMS administrators. Ownership of content in LMS course shells shall be governed by contractual agreements, University policy and Board of Trustees Regulations.

3.2. LMS Administrative Data

Information regarding LMS system performance or usage is the property of the University. Information regarding specific LMS course shells or individual accounts must be held in confidence to the extent legally permissible. However, data may be gathered and presented in aggregated form for professional development activities, such as conference presentations and/or scholarly/industry publication.

4. ACCESS TO THE LMS

4.1. LMS User Single-Sign-On

All user accounts in the LMS shall be tied directly to users' Northeastern NetIDs and passwords, following Northeastern's I1.01.5 SECURE AUTHENTICATION policy. No LMS user accounts will be set up using other account IDs, except for the purposes of guest, temporary, and test accounts (see 4.6 GUEST AND TEMPORARY ACCESS, below).

4.2. Faculty Access and Responsibilities

Faculty shall be responsible to:

- administer their own LMS course(s), including design, creation, uploading, and backup of course content.
- acquire copyright permission as needed for any information in any medium used within the LMS.
- activate their LMS course(s) (see 1.6 COURSE ACTIVATION, above),
- verify that their LMS class rosters match the class rosters in the University ID-management system.
- inform students how to access and navigate their LMS course(s).
- download and save/print the LMS grade report (see 1.12 LMS GRADE INFORMATION, above).
- export or archive their LMS course(s).
- store backups of course materials in their Master course shell(s).



4.3. Student Access and Responsibilities

Each student shall maintain course security by not sharing their username and password with other individuals.

4.4. Students Making Up an Incomplete Grade

To avoid open-ended student access to LMS courses where they are not enrolled by the University ID management system, faculty members must request to enroll students to make up a grade of Incomplete via the CTL web site (see 7.5 THE CTL WEB SITE, below). The Registrar's office must confirm that a grade of Incomplete has been assigned before the LMS administrators may enroll the requested students in any LMS course shells.

4.5. Administrator Access and Responsibilities

The University is obliged to provide one or more LMS administrators to oversee the technical workings of the LMS.

Occasional upgrades and maintenance to the system hardware and software must be scheduled at times that will minimize the impact upon the University. The LMS administrators must provide users with advance notice of such upgrades.

Information or data discovered about a course site or user during the course of routine LMS Admin functions, system testing, or maintenance must be kept in confidence and must not be shared with any other user of the LMS. LMS administrators have the right to access individual LMS sites, tools, and courses in order to solve technical-support issues, in response to help queries from faculty members, or in situations where the instructor is unable to continue the course (e.g., serious instructor illness).

All LMS site access granted to University administrators or faculty members outside of the situations described in this policy shall be approved by the University contract administrator or Vice President-level administrator (or higher).

4.6. Guest And Temporary Access

Occasionally, granting guest access is necessary for certain university operations. Guest access can be provided when individuals need access to the LMS but are not able to be assigned via the student information system. These circumstances include, but are not limited to, the following: accreditation processes; and retention and promotion observations.

Upon receipt of a request, a guest-user account will be assigned and the faculty member will receive a message via NEIU e-mail with the username, password, and instructions for logging in.

New faculty hires may be assigned to teach courses before their accounts have been fully processed in the University's student information software system. For data security, temporary instructor accounts must

- be assigned only to faculty members who do not have Northeastern NetIDs and passwords,
- be requested by Department chairs (or higher) via the CTL web site (see 2.5 THE CTL WEB SITE, below).

New faculty hires may be assigned to teach courses before their accounts have been fully processed in the University's student information system. For data security, temporary instructor accounts must:

- be assigned only to faculty members who do not have Northeastern NetIDs and passwords,
- expire after a set number of days, and
- be requested by Department chairs (or higher) via the CTL web site (see 7.5 THE CTL WEB SITE, below).



4.7. Special-Role Access

Students or staff may be assigned by the Provost, Dean, department, or support area to serve in special roles in LMS course environments (e.g., peer tutors, learning coaches, graduate assistants, sign-language interpreters). These students and staff are not enrolled into LMS courses via the University's student information software system, so these types of roles must be activated by request, via the CTL web site (see 7.5 THE CTL WEB SITE, below).

Note: Peer tutors, learning coaches, graduate assistants, sign-language interpreters, and all special-role enrollments will have student-level access to LMS courses in which they are enrolled.

4.8. Access to LMS Shells of Ex-Faculty

In the case of an LMS course taught by a faculty member who is no longer employed by Northeastern, the department chair or other senior-level administrator (e.g., dean) has the right to request access to the master course shell or teaching shell by contacting the LMS administrators, who will grant the access upon approval by the Provost or the Provost's designee.

This right of access does not automatically grant the right to use content located within an LMS course (see 3: INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY, above).

5. ENROLLMENT

5.1. Instructor LMS Enrollment

Instructors must be enrolled into the LMS courses they are teaching automatically using registration data fed from the University's student information system into the LMS server. Instructors may not manually enroll or self-enroll into LMS courses.

Instructors may not turn on self-enrollment access for students or manually enroll students into LMS courses.

All enrollment, disabling, and reinstatement of instructor accounts in the LMS must be done via the University's student information system, and not in the LMS itself, with as few exceptions as practically possible (see 4.6 GUEST AND TEMPORARY ACCESS, above; 4.7 SPECIAL-ROLE ACCESS, above; and 5.4 OTHER ENROLLMENTS, below).

5.2. Student LMS Enrollment

Students must be enrolled into the LMS automatically using registration data fed from the University's student information system into the LMS server. Students may not manually enroll or self-enroll into LMS courses.

If a student is removed from a course by the University's student-information software system (due to dropping the course, non-payment of fees, academic hold, etc.), the student's LMS account must be disabled in the LMS course. Disabling must not delete the student's prior work.

All enrollment, disabling, and reinstatement of student accounts in the LMS must be done via the University's student information system, and not in the LMS itself, with as few exceptions as practically possible (see 4.6 GUEST AND TEMPORARY ACCESS and 4.7 SPECIAL-ROLE ACCESS, above).

5.3. Auditors

Students auditing courses must be enrolled as auditors via the Registrar's office. Thus, auditors are enrolled in their LMS courses via the University's student information system, in the same way as for-credit students. Student auditors may not be enrolled manually into LMS courses.



5.4. Other Enrollments

Faculty have the right to provide access to their LMS master shells for purposes not outlined above (e.g., allowing colleagues access into the course), via the request forms on the CTL web site (see 7.5 THE CTL WEB SITE, below).

6. INFORMATION SECURITY

6.1. Student Data Security

As with other University records, faculty members must closely guard FERPA-protected student information (including grades, test scores, user names, ID numbers). Grades and feedback on individual student performance must never be posted so that other students may see them (e.g., do not post grades in a spreadsheet uploaded to the LMS course shell).

7. SUPPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

7.1. Help Features

LMS administrators are responsible for providing help content based on a user's role (e.g., student, faculty) in the form of point-of-need assistance.

7.2. Faculty Support

The CTL is obligated to support Faculty using the LMS through assistance with course design, pedagogy, multimedia creation/use, copyright, and learning theory.

7.3. Student Support

Student Computing Services and the University Help Desk are responsible for supporting student users of the LMS, including responding to general questions regarding LMS access issues, LMS tool usage, and general connectivity troubleshooting.

7.4. Student Computing Services/Help Desk

In order to provide timely assistance to students, staff members in the Student Computing Services and Help Desk areas may enter any LMS course shells with student-only access rights. Staff members in these areas are not permitted to see or change student grades or performance in any LMS course shell.

7.5. The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) Web Site

The CTL is obligated to provide LMS resources on its web site, including:

- tutorials, reference materials, best practices and other resources for LMS instructors;
- best practices for department chairs, deans, and other administrators; and
- request forms and processes for common LMS requests and situations.

7.6. LMS-Wide Announcements

LMS Admin use of announcements that are visible to all users of the LMS must be limited to announcements related to the LMS. Such announcements must be posted in common areas of the LMS and not in individual course environments.

7.7. NEIUport Targeted Personal Announcements

LMS-related announcements for faculty, students, and others in the community (e.g., planned or unplanned outages and system upgrades) must be communicated via targeted personal announcements in the campus portal and targeted e-mail messages to recipients' University e-mail addresses.



7.8. Outage Communications

Planned LMS outages for system upgrades or maintenance must be announced in advance to affected LMS users. Unplanned or emergency outages must be posted as quickly as possible.

PROCEDURES

All University students, faculty, and staff will adhere to the procedural directives outlined in the Regulations section above.

AUTHOR REFERENCE

Kromrey, J. "Intellectual Property and Online Courses: Policies at Major Research Universities." National Educational Computing Conference. Philadelphia, PA: June 27-30, 2005.

http://htmlscript.auburn.edu/outreach/dl/pdfs/Intellectual_Property_and_Online_Courses.pdf.

Ramsdell, Nancy. "LMS Course Availability Policy." Worcester State University. Oct. 19, 2012.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20100531184937/http://www.worcester.edu/teamsites/Policies/Wiki%20Pages/LMS%20Course%20Availability.aspx>.

University of North Carolina at Greensboro. "Learning Management System Use Policy." May 15, 2010.

http://policy.uncg.edu/learning_management_system/.

University of Tennessee. "Site Policies." <http://extol.tennessee.edu/policies/index.htm>.

HISTORY

Original Draft: "Blackboard LMS Policies and Guidelines." 08/28/2008

Faculty Council on Technology Draft: Revised title and all policy elements to reflect a generic LMS stance. 3/21/2013

Faculty Council on Technology Draft: Formatted to follow NEIU Policy Template, content as approved at FCoT meeting 2/20/2014

Revised per University comment-period feedback from Faculty Senate Policy Committee 2/6/2015

Comprehensive revision June 2023

08/09/2024 – completed internal review and ready for public comment. Reclass to A2.03.7

RELATED POLICIES AND OTHER INFORMATIONAL MATERIAL

[University Policies – Information Technology](#)

I1.01.1 Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources

I1.01.2 User Account and Access Management

I1.01.4 Remote Network Connection

I1.01.5 Secure Authentication

I1.02.1 Password Management

I1.02.3 Software Applications Security

I1.02.4 Identity Protection

I1.03.1 University E-Mail

I1.04.2 Targeted Announcements

I1.99.1 Data Governance – Interim Policy



CONTACT INFORMATION

Please direct questions or concerns about this policy to:

Contact	Phone	E-Mail
Office of the Provost / Academic Affairs	(773) 442-5420	academic-affairs@neu.edu

DISCLAIMER

The University reserves the right to modify or amend sections of this policy at any time at its sole discretion. This policy remains in effect until such time as the Responsible Officer calls for review. Requests for exception to any portion of this policy, but not to the policy statement, must be presented in writing to the Responsible Officer.